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CLOWES', John

AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS

TO

T H E C L E R G Y

ON

THE THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

TRACT NO. XVIII.

FOR

T H E N E W C H U R C H

IN

THE UNITED STATES.

WITH A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

BY B. F. BARRETT.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY OTIS CLAPP

NEW YORK: JOHN ALLEN.

1846.

A S K E T C H
OF THE
L I F E A N D C H A R A C T E R
OF THE
R E V. J O H N C L O W E S.

THE following AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS to the Clergy was first published in England more than sixty years ago. Its design was to invite all Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a candid examination of the remarkable writings of one of the most remarkable men that ever appeared on earth. It comes not from one who was himself ignorant of the real character and tendency of these writings, but who had made them his study for many years, and whose life was formed in accordance with them. Its language is not the language of an enthusiast, a bigot, or a hypocrite, but rather that of a sober, calm, reasonable, catholic, and good man. Although addressed to the clergy, the invitation it contains is one which it imports all men solemnly to heed. The reader may desire to know something of the character of the writer of this Address; and with the view of gratifying this desire, the following brief sketch of his life, compiled from his published memoir, is here prefixed.

THE REV. JOHN CLOWES, the author of the Address, was born at Manchester, Oct. 31, 1743. Both his father and mother (the latter of whom was removed to the spiritual world when he was seven years old) are described as remarkably virtuous, pious and exemplary people. From them he early received a strong religious bias, which never forsook him; and late in life he expresses his devout gratitude to the Father of mercies, for those sweet heavenly influences which his parents were the medium of imparting to his mind in his tenderest years.

Great care was bestowed on his early education, particularly upon the development and formation of his religious character, and in shielding him from all corrupting moral influences.

In 1761, at the age of eighteen, he was admitted a pensioner of Trinity College. He speaks of this event as one peculiarly

gratifying to his feelings ; for his thoughts had been previously turned towards the Christian ministry, and this gave promise of a future realization of his hopes in this respect.

He was gifted with an active and vigorous mind, a warm heart, and a deep and ardent love of knowledge ; and often, while pursuing his studies at the university, he had the wisdom to reflect, that both the affection of science, and the genuine delights of friendship, descend from above. On one occasion, he says, " He recollects being so powerfully struck with this sentiment, that he was compelled to fall down on his knees before the Father of Mercies, in devout adoration of his divine bounty ; first, for having communicated to His children the love of knowledge, and for opening to their view that new world of wonders which knowledge discovers ; and, secondly, for having inspired the delights of disinterested friendship, which appeared to him, at that time, the purest and highest joys which the human mind is capable of tasting."

* In 1766, after having completed the usual term of five years at the university, he was admitted to his first degree in arts, and his name was inserted in the first list of candidates for university honors. He was immediately appointed private tutor to several young gentlemen, and some time after received from another college very flattering and advantageous offers, which seemed to open a way to the first dignities and highest emoluments both in the university and in the church. But this offer he was obliged to decline on account of ill health.

As a Latin scholar he was particularly distinguished. During the period that he was employed in the capacity of private tutor, he was twice a successful candidate for a prize given by the University's representatives in Parliament, to the two middle and two senior bachelors, who composed the best Latin Essay.

In 1767, he was initiated by the Bishop of London into the holy office of the Christian ministry ; and in two years after this, he accepted the rectorship of St. John's Church in Manchester, then just erected. Of this church he remained Rector during the unusual term of sixty-two years—till the close of his natural life—respected and beloved by all who knew him.

It was about four years after this, in the spring of 1773, that Mr. Clowes was introduced to Richard Houghton, Esq., of Liverpool, a gentleman of large estate, and of acknowledged piety and learning. Mr. Houghton had enjoyed the advantages of a university education, possessed a large library, and was a great reader, particularly of Theology, which was his favorite study. Mr. Clowes learned, from conversation with this excellent man, that he had been for a few years past an affec-

tionate and diligent reader of the theological writings of Em. Swedenborg, in the original Latin, and that he prized those writings above all price. At the close of their interview he recommended to Mr. Clowes, in an earnest and affectionate manner, the perusal of these remarkable writings, advising him to commence with the work entitled *Vera Christiana Religio*, (True Christian Religion,) which had not then been translated into English. The only work of Swedenborg to be found in English at that time, was the *Treatise on Influx*.

Upon this little circumstance Mr. Clowes never ceased to look back, as upon one of the happiest, most important, and most interesting events of his whole life. He was too much affected by the earnestness, tenderness, and evident sincerity which accompanied this gentleman's recommendation, not to comply with the tenor of it immediately on his return home. Accordingly he sent to London and obtained a copy of the *Vera Christiana Religio*. But, what will seem to some a little remarkable, after he had obtained the book, he felt not the slightest inclination to read it for a considerable time. The volume was rather repulsive to him on account of its size. Then he observed that it treated principally on points of doctrine, and this rendered it still more repulsive. And besides, "I am satisfied," said he to himself, "with my present spiritual attainments, and with that heaven of innocence, purity, and peace in God, to which they have introduced me. What need I then to trouble or concern myself about speculative investigations, which cannot add either to my sanctity or bliss? Alas!" he adds, "I was not aware, at the time, either of the pearls of wisdom which I was overlooking, or of my own want of them, both for ornament and for use. I was deceiving myself (as is the case, it is to be feared, with many Christians) by supposing that I had attained the highest point of Christian purification and perfection, and was already in full possession of the supreme good and the supreme truth, without considering that the Christian life is a continually progressive life, and that to stand still, therefore, under any present attainments, whether of goodness or wisdom, is to change its character from progressive to stagnant."

For several months the *Vera Christiana Religio* remained upon his shelf unexamined and untouched. At length a remarkable and very interesting circumstance occurred, which induced him to take up and read with attention, and without prejudice, this hitherto neglected volume. We give the circumstance in Mr. Clowes' own language:

"In the month of October, immediately succeeding the spring, when the *True Christian Religion* was recommended to

me, by my friend at Liverpool, I went, according to annual custom, to visit an old college pupil of mine, the late Right Honorable John Smyth of Heath, in the county of York. On the evening before I set out, I opened the long neglected volume, not with a view to read it, but merely to get a better idea of the general nature of its contents, when, in turning over the pages, I happened to cast my eye upon the term *Divinum Humanum*. The term appeared new and strange, but still it did not affect my mind in a manner to produce any lasting impression, and accordingly, on shutting up the book, it seemed to be forgotten and gone. Probably, too, it would never again have been recalled to my remembrance, had it not been for the following memorable circumstance.

"On awaking early one morning, not many days after my arrival at my friend's house, my mind was suddenly and powerfully drawn into a state of inward recollection, attended with an inexpressible calm and composure, into which was instilled a tranquillity of peace and heavenly joy, such as I had never before experienced. Whilst I lay musing on this strange, and to me most delightful harmony in the interiors of my mind, instantly there was made manifest, in the same recesses of my spirit, what I can call by no other name than a *divine glory*, surpassing all description, and exciting the most profound adoration. But what seemed to me the most singular circumstance on this occasion was, that I was strongly impressed at the time, by a kind of internal dictate, that *the glory* was in close connexion with that *Divinum Humanum*, or *Divine Humanity* above mentioned, and proceeded from it, as from its proper divine source.

"*The glory* continued during a full hour, allowing me sufficient time both to view and analyze it. Sometimes I closed my bodily eyes, and then opened them again, but *the glory* remained the same. It is well, however, to be understood, that there was no appearance presented of any visible form, but only a strong persuasion that *the glory* proceeded from a visible form, and that this form was no other than the *Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ*. When *the glory* disappeared, as it did by degrees, I quitted my bed, but the recollection of what had happened attended me during the whole of the day, whether I was in company or alone; and what is still more remarkable, the next morning, on my first awaking, *the glory* was again manifested, but, if possible, with increased splendor. Now, too, a singular effect was produced by it upon my mind, convincing me of the spiritual and providential origin of what I had seen, by the important end to which it pointed, and was designed to conduct me. The effect was no other than the

excitement of a strong and almost irresistible desire to return home immediately, in order to enter upon a serious and attentive perusal of the *neglected volume*, which I had left behind me. And such was the powerful impulse of this desire, that although I had intended to remain with my friend a week or a fortnight longer, yet I made some excuse for quitting his house the next day, and hastened back to Manchester, rather with the impetuosity of a lover, than with the sedateness of a man who had no other object of pursuit but to consult the pages of an unknown, and heretofore slighted *book*."

This circumstance is not very unlike that which happened to the Apostle Paul on his way to Damascus, and scarcely less remarkable. And we certainly have as good reason for believing the former as the latter: nor is it more easy to account for one than for the other. The great purpose of the Divine Providence is equally apparent in both cases. As the "light above the brightness of the sun," which Paul saw, had the effect to change him from an opponent and persecutor of the Christians, to an able and successful promulgator of their doctrines, so this experience of Mr. Clowes had the effect to induce him to read the writings of Swedenborg, whereby he was led to see and acknowledge the Lord as he has revealed himself at this his second advent, and to devote his life to the promulgation of the truths of the New Dispensation. As Paul, after his conversion, did more than any other man to extend the knowledge of the Lord's first advent, so Mr. Clowes did more than has been done by any other one, to extend a knowledge of his second coming. •

Doubtless a variety of sentiments will be awakened in the minds of different readers by the above relation, and a diversity of opinions will accordingly be formed respecting it. The author expected this. He expected that it would be doubted by some, and derided by others. "But shall the truth be suppressed," he says, "because a sinful and unbelieving world is unwilling to admit it? Rather is not this an additional reason why the truth should be told, since it is impossible to conceive how infidelity can be successfully combatted, but by the testimony of a Divine revelation, and the certainty of those supernatural facts which the Providence of God has vouchsafed in all ages for its overthrow."

We are sure that the circumstance narrated will not excite derision in any pious mind; and we are equally sure that its truth will not be doubted by any who are at all familiar with the author's life and character. They cannot help believing with him, that the *transcendant glory*, which was then manifested, together with its effect in enkindling an ardent desire

to peruse the *True Christian Religion*, were the blessed results, not of fancy or imagination, but rather of the divine presence and operation of the Lord God, the Saviour Jesus Christ, in His Divine Humanity, inclining and preparing him to read diligently, and receive affectionately, the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and thus to bear his glad testimony to the second glorious advent of his God."

A sudden change in his feelings towards the long neglected book, was wrought by this remarkable circumstance. He immediately felt an intense and uncontrollable desire to read it. He read it—and his interest and delight in its teachings increased with every page he read. "It is impossible," says he, "for any language to express the full effect wrought in my mind by the perusal of this wonderful *book*. Suffice it, therefore, to observe, that, in proceeding from the chapter on the *Creator and on Creation* to the succeeding chapters—it seemed as if a continually increasing blaze of new and recreating light was poured forth on the delighted understanding, opening it to the contemplation of the most sublime mysteries of wisdom, and convincing it of the being of a God, of the existence of an eternal world, of the interior sanctities of the Holy Scriptures, of the true nature of creation, redemption, and regeneration, in a manner and degree, and with a force of satisfactory evidence, in which those interesting subjects had never been viewed before. The mind was no longer perplexed about the proper Object of its worship. All difficulties and doubts were removed respecting the sacred Scriptures, or word of God, through the bright, and heretofore unseen, manifestation of their spiritual and interior contents, by virtue of which discovery apparent inconsistencies vanished, apparent contradictions were reconciled; and what before seemed trivial and nugatory, assumed a new and interesting aspect; whilst the whole volume of Revelation was seen to be full of sanctity, of wisdom, and of love from its divine Author, and also to be in perpetual connexion with that Author, who is its inmost soul—*its essential spirit and life*."

Encouraged by the stores of heavenly wisdom which he found in this volume, Mr. Clowes naturally felt a strong desire to read more of Swedenborg's theological works. "Accordingly," (to cite again his own language,) "no sooner had I finished the perusal of the *True Christian Religion*, than the *Treatise on Heaven and Hell*, the *Arcana Cœlestia*, the *Apocalypse Revealed*, the *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom*, and also concerning the *Divine Providence*, the *Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love*, &c., with other minor tracts by the same author, were successively read,

or rather devoured, and as constantly excited wonder, delight, and edification. At the same time a strong and ardent desire was enkindled to put others in possession of the same sources of heavenly intelligence; and this desire frequently, yet tacitly, expressed itself in those words of the great Saviour, where he prays, '*Father, that they may be with me, to behold Thy glory.*' John 17: 24. For the whole testimony as delivered by the messenger of the New Jerusalem Verities, in his theological writings, appeared to my mind like a *radiant glory, from the face of Jesus Christ*, and repeatedly called to my recollection the words of that Incarnate God, where, speaking of His second advent, He says, '*Then shall ye see the sign of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*' Mat. 24: 30."

Impelled by the strong desire above mentioned, of making known to others the glorious truths of the New Jerusalem, Mr. Clowes immediately commenced translating the works of Swedenborg into English; and in about two years he completed the translation of the True Christian Religion, and in about twenty years the translation of the Arcana Cœlestia, (13 Vols.,) Conjugal Love, Earths in the Universe, and the Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem..

From the time he first became interested in the writings of Swedenborg, to the close of his natural life—a period of nearly sixty years—Mr. Clowes remained a diligent reader, an affectionate receiver, and an active and successful promulgator of the doctrines of the New Church. No other individual, perhaps, has ever done so much towards propagating these doctrines, as he did. He preached them openly, earnestly, and constantly from his pulpit. He conversed and lectured upon them at his own house, and on every suitable occasion elsewhere. He wrote numerous letters about them to his friends at home and abroad. And besides translating the principal part of the works of Swedenborg, above mentioned, he wrote and published about fifty works of his own, in defence and explanation of the Heavenly Doctrines. A considerable number of these, however, were quite small—mere pamphlets; and some were volumes of sermons. And besides all this, he made many visits to receivers, and to the Societies of the New Church which he had aided to establish in different parts of the kingdom; and never, from his own account, was he happier than on these occasions.

Notwithstanding his deep interest in the doctrines of the New Church, and his zeal in disseminating them, it is a singular fact, and one which evinces in a striking manner the remarkable character of the man, that he was permitted to

retain the rectorship of St. John's Church until the close of his natural life ; and not only so, but retained the hearts of his people in a manner almost unprecedented, and was listened to by crowds of delighted hearers.

But he did not escape opposition and persecution altogether. This was not to be expected. At one time there were three clergymen in his neighborhood, who held regular weekly meetings for the purpose of crushing, what they were pleased to call, the growing heresy. The most unfounded rumors respecting Swedenborg and his doctrines, and the most bitter and scurrilous invectives, emanated from this source almost daily. Nor were his persecutors content with employing their tongues only ; they had recourse to their pens. They wrote and published a pamphlet in which they endeavored to prove that the writings of Swedenborg were in direct opposition both to religion and common sense. Mr. Clowes immediately replied to this pamphlet. They next appealed to the Right Rev. Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of the Diocese, preferring, in a formal manner, the four following charges against Mr. Clowes : 1st, that he denied the *Trinity* ; 2d, that he denied the *Atone-ment* ; 3d, that he went about the country endeavoring to *propagate the New Doctrines* ; 4th, that he had *private meetings* at his own house for the *same purpose*. Even the Bishop himself was reprimanded, because, at a visitation held in the preceding summer, he had passed no public censure on the accused. Mr. Clowes was accordingly summoned to appear before the Bishop to answer to the above charges. He appeared and answered—in a manner, it is said, quite satisfactory to the Bishop, who is reported to have said afterwards, that he wished there were many more John Clowes in his diocese. He listened patiently to his reply to each charge, “and in conclusion dismissed him with a friendly caution to be upon his guard against his adversaries, who seemed disposed to do him mischief.”

His treatment from the Bishop rather damped the ardor of his persecutors ; and from this time the spirit of persecution began to subside, and he was permitted, without further molestation, both to preach and publish his own sentiments.

The truly Christian courage and meekness which Mr. Clowes displayed under this persecution are beautiful to contemplate. “I was made sensible.” to use his own language, “of divine protection, by the tranquillity and composure in which my mind was preserved. I experienced also a degree of the blessing announced in those words of the *Eternal Truth*, where it is written, ‘*Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*’

Mat. 5: 11. For the violence of the opposition made to my sentiments only tended the more to confirm them, by rooting them deeper in my mind, and connecting them the more closely with their Divine Original, through purity and humiliation of heart and life.—Such is the happy effect resulting from all that opposition and outrage, which the Father of mercies permits to be exercised on His children by wicked men and infernal spirits, in order to lead them to a fuller dependence upon Himself, and, at the same time, to a deeper sense and feeling of their own sinfulness, defilement, and infirmity.”

All who knew Mr. Clowes personally were constrained to speak well of him,—to bear testimony to the remarkable purity, strength, and elevation of his character, to the uprightness, innocence, and beauty of his life. His biographer, after enumerating some of his excellencies and his valuable labors, says: “But what most delighted those with whom he associated, was, his unaffected piety, his Christian charity, his humility and innocence of character, together with his amiable and gentlemanly deportment; these excellencies, combined with his great abilities and acquirements as a scholar and divine, rendered him one of those exalted characters, which are, at this day, rarely to be met with.

On account of his bodily infirmities he was unable to perform his usual public duties in the church for about fifteen years previous to his decease. But he was not idle during this period. His pen was busily employed for the edification and benefit of the Lord’s New Church, in which labor he seemed ever to delight. It was during this time that he wrote the three volumes of Scripture Histories, explained according to their spiritual meaning; also the beautiful Treatise on *Opposites*, and the works entitled, *Christian Temper*, and the *Twelve Hours of the Day*.

His people still continued their affectionate attachment to him, and felt the same lively interest in him, after his public labors in the pulpit ceased. When Mr. Clowes entered upon the fiftieth year of his incumbency as Rector of St. John’s Church, his congregation, desirous of testifying their affectionate respect and esteem for his public and private worth, and anxious to commemorate by some permanent memorial an event so remarkable and gratifying, held a meeting for the purpose of consulting upon the best manner of doing this. At this meeting (July 24th, 1818) it was unanimously

“Resolved—That a MARBLE TABLET, with an appropriate inscription, be placed in a conspicuous part of the church; and

that the Rector be requested to sit for his portrait, in order that it may be put up in the vestry.

"*Resolved*,—That a subscription be entered into, for the accomplishment of the object of this meeting."

"In consequence of the above resolutions," says his biographer, "an admirable portrait of the Rector, by J. Allen, Esq., was placed in the vestry, and a beautiful piece of sculpture, designed and executed by John Flaxman, Esq., R. A., (a particular and esteemed friend of Mr. C.,) was erected at the east end of the church, immediately above the Rector's seat. It consists of a tablet of white marble, containing no less than ten figures, in basso relievo. The venerable Rector is represented in the act of instructing a most interesting group of children, who are accompanied by their parents and grandsire, to signify the three generations who had attended Mr. Clowes' ministry. Behind the Rector stands a guardian angel bearing a palm branch, expressive of the divine protection. In a word, whilst the sculpture itself forms a striking embellishment to the interior of the church, yet, associated as it is with such a spontaneous and universal feeling of veneration and respect from the congregation, and with the virtues that had so eminently adorned the Christian minister during his long and valuable life,—such a memorial as this, is, perhaps, without a parallel."

On the tablet, beneath the figures, is the following inscription :

To Commemorate

THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE MINISTRY
OF THE REV. JOHN CLOWES, M. A.

THE FIRST AND THE PRESENT RECTOR
OF THIS CHURCH;

AND TO TESTIFY THEIR

AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM AND VENERATION
FOR THE PIETY, LEARNING, AND BENEVOLENCE
OF THEIR AMIABLE PASTOR;

WITH FEELINGS OF DEVOUT GRATITUDE TO ALMIGHTY GOD
WHO HATH HITHERTO PRESERVED—

AND WITH THEIR UNITED PRAYERS
THAT HIS GOOD PROVIDENCE WILL LONG CONTINUE
TO PRESERVE AMONGST THEM,

SO EMINENT AND ENGAGING AN EXAMPLE
OF CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS, PURITY, AND LOVE,

THE CONGREGATION OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, MANCHESTER,
ERECT THIS TABLET.

MDCCCXIX.

The following is an extract from the address to Mr. Clowes, after the tablet was completed, delivered in the church by the senior church-warden, who was one of the committee under whose direction and superintendence it was erected.

“—— In showing you this tribute of our veneration and regard, permit me, Sir, to offer you, on behalf of this committee, our united wishes for the continuance of your health and happiness, with our humble and devout hopes that it may please Divine Providence to prolong your valuable life for many years to come. And though we must not, I fear, again have the high gratification of hearing your energetic and heavenly eloquence from the pulpit, yet we trust that we shall still have the benefit of your amiable and truly pious life before our eyes, for our imitation; and we pray that it may be long preserved to us, as it has hitherto always been, a bright example of every Christian grace and virtue.”

The reply to this address, made by the venerable Rector, on the occasion, is worthy the pure and noble character of the man—strikingly indicative of his deep sincerity, his genuine piety, his ardent love of truth, and his lively interest in the spiritual welfare of his people and of mankind.

Mr. Clowes was removed to the world of spirits on the 29th of May, 1831, aged nearly 88 years. He died as he had lived—full of kindness and of Christian love—full of confidence in the truth of the doctrines revealed through Swedenborg, to the promulgation of which his life had been devoted, and according to which his character had been formed—full of earnest longing that these doctrines might be more extensively read and circulated, and that all others might learn from experience, as he had learned, their searching, purifying, ennobling, and regenerating power.

One or two extracts from the obituary notices of Mr. Clowes, which appeared in some of the English papers of the day, will show how he was esteemed by all who knew him. The following is extracted from a notice in the London Times of June 4th, 1831:

“—— His affections were ever alive towards all who came within the sphere of his usefulness; and it would have been difficult for any one to resist the influence of that goodness which showed itself in all he did, or said, or looked; and to have been with him, even for a little while, without being impressed with a sense of the loveliness of Christian principle, as it was exemplified in him. He was a scholar—an elegant and a sound one; but he felt that the highest triumph of human learning and wisdom, is, when they are subservient to the establishment of those everlasting truths, by which man lives forever. In simplicity of heart, in unity of purpose, in the abandonment of every selfish consideration, in the unclouded and playful cheerfulness of a pure and benevolent mind, in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, in the beauty and

happiness of genuine holiness, he truly adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things; and being tried by long suffering, he found that that in which he trusted was sufficient for him, in all circumstances, and unto the end. Those who did not know him, may believe this tribute to be the offspring of partial friendship and affection; but the many who did, will feel how inefficient must be the attempt rightly to commemorate his admirable and truly Christian excellencies."

The following is an extract from a notice in the *Manchester Courier* of the same date with the above:

"—— In zeal, in tenderness, in piety, in wisdom, in activity, in usefulness;—as a friend, a counsellor, a pastor, a spiritual father, and an exemplary pattern of all holy life, his superior was not to be found; it would be difficult to name his equal.

"He was a scholar, a philosopher, a finished gentleman, a luminous writer, an impressive preacher, a practical Christian divine.

"In him the elements of an originally happy nature were sweetly blended; tempered and richly adorned by an abundant portion of the spirit of divine grace; holiness had attained great heights—first principles had gone on unto perfection.

"—— In recording the excellence of this venerable man and truly apostolic minister, it may be allowed to mark, as prominent features of a character in which all was lovely, his child-like simplicity, his singleness of heart, the elevation of his devotion, the cheerfulness of his piety, the beauty of his holiness, the charity of his zeal, his bright imagination, his lively fancy, the ease of his seriousness, the innocence of his mirth, the purity of his exuberant joy.

"He was admirable in all the faculties and powers of an enlightened mind; but the charm by which he won and ruled the hearts of all was that grace in man which is the nearest image on earth of a holy and merciful God,—the boundless benevolence of a truly Catholic spirit.

"Of Mr. Clowes it may justly be said, 'his wisdom was a loving spirit;' of his 'virtue, the memorial is immortal, because it is known with God and with men: when it was present men took example of it; and when it was gone they desired it: it weareth a crown, and triumpheth forever, having gotten the victory, striving for undefiled rewards.'

"This admirable person enjoyed, in a singular degree, through life, the respect and affection of all by whom he was known; but, in an especial manner, the veneration of his own flock, over which (and it was his first and only cure of

souls) he was, by God's providence, the shepherd for the very unusual term of nearly sixty-two years."

Shortly after his decease, his parishioners and other friends resolved to erect "a handsome *Marble Monument*," or *Tablet*, to his memory, to be placed in the church over the churchwarden's pew, "with an appropriate inscription thereon." This resolution was soon carried into effect, and a monument was designed and executed by Richard Westmacott. The Tablet contains six figures in basso relievo, beautifully executed in marble. The design appears to be a continuation of the idea originated by Flaxman; and as in the Tablet before mentioned, Mr. Clowes appears in the active duties of his calling, so this illustrates well the closing scene of his long, useful, and well-spent life. The venerable subject is represented on his death-bed, with mild and benignant, though somewhat emaciated face, his left hand extended towards a cross in the midst of rays of glory, upon which he is gazing, and his right hand resting upon the Inspired Volume, which lies open by his side. The other figures are represented in attitudes, and with countenances, expressive of the emotions which the sight of this good man, at the hour of his departure, was calculated to awaken. Beneath the figures is the following inscription:

**Sacred to the Memory of
THE REVEREND JOHN CLOWES, M. A.**

RECTOR OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JOHN'S,
(HIS FIRST AND ONLY CURE OF SOULS)
DURING THE EXTRAORDINARY TERM
OF SIXTY-TWO YEARS.

HE WAS BORN 31ST OCT. 1743, AND DIED 29TH MAY, 1831.

~~~~~  
HE WAS A SAINT

IN WHOM THE WORK OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS EXPRESSED  
"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE, BY LONG-SUFFERING, BY KINDNESS,  
BY THE HOLY GHOST, BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."

AS A LEARNED SCHOLAR, A FINISHED GENTLEMAN, A LUMINOUS WRITER,  
AN IMPRESSIVE PREACHER, A VIGILANT PASTOR, A SPIRITUAL MORALIST,  
AND A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN DIVINE,

HE GAVE REAL EVIDENCE THAT "GODLINESS HATH THE PROMISE OF  
THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME."

HE PASSED THROUGH THIS EARTH IN JOY AND THANKSGIVING,  
EXPERIENCING, TO HIS GREAT BLESSEDNESS, EVEN TO THE END,  
THAT "THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS SHINING LIGHT, WHICH  
SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY."

~~~~~  
THE ABOVE MONUMENT WAS ERECTED
AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS,
TO TESTIFY THEIR LOVE OF THE MAN, AND TO RECORD IN THIS CHURCH
THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS MINISTRY.

Such, dear reader, is a hasty and imperfect sketch of the character of the man who speaks to you in the following "AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS." Judge for yourself whether his voice be the voice of one who deserves to be heard, or whether it be a light thing, when heard, to slight his reasonable request. Judge for yourself whether this man had the requisite qualifications of heart and head, to enable him to judge correctly of the character and tendency of the writings which he here so earnestly recommends to your attention. Judge whether any sinister, selfish or worldly motive—any blind or mistaken zeal for the interests of a sect or party—whether anything, indeed, save a simple love of truth, and an earnest desire for the salvation of souls, could have prompted him to address you in this earnest and affectionate manner. Remember, that, when he wrote this address, he was in formal connection with the Church of England, and remained in that connection till the day of his death. Self-interest, reputation, and a regard for worldly honors, therefore, as well as zeal for the sect with which he was externally connected, could not have prompted an act like this.

You are not urged by the author to *believe* what Swedenborg has written, but merely to *examine* his writings—seriously, candidly, impartially, thoroughly—and then to make up a judgment for yourself from the evidence presented. Judge whether this invitation be reasonable or not. If reasonable, be wise enough to give heed to it ; if unreasonable, heed it not.

AN
AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS
TO THE CLERGY.

BY REV. JOHN CLOWES.

REV. BRETHREN,—Deeply impressed with veneration for your sacred character as ministers of the truth, and with as real a concern for the interests of that truth of which you are the ministers, I feel myself induced by many powerful and pressing motives, to call your attention for a moment to a few considerations respecting the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, so far as the contents of those writings appear to me more immediately to affect the duties imposed on you by your holy functions and high station.

You are in a peculiar sense the *Ministers of God*, entrusted with the oracles of his Word, and commissioned to read, to meditate upon, to understand, to preach and explain, the laws of the eternal wisdom therein contained. From you the people receive the interpretation of those laws, and *their* understanding of them must needs, in a great measure, depend on *yours*. *If the light which is in you be darkness*, the light which is in the people will most probably be darkness also; but if your *bodies be full of light*, it may then be reasonably expected, that those of the people will be likewise *full of light*. The state, therefore, of religious knowledge in the land, will ever take its standard from *you*, and of consequence, whatsoever is connected with religious knowledge has a peculiar claim upon your attention, and you must necessarily feel yourselves bound by every motive of duty and

good conscience, to take cognizance thereof in the fear of God, and out of due regard to the interests of that truth with which you are more especially entrusted.

It is from this view of the importance of your sacred character, and of the duties thence resulting, that I am principally led to address you on the present occasion ; and this, let it be believed, not in the spirit of petulance, or any inclination to dictate authoritatively, still less in the spirit of bigotry or any sectarian prejudices ; but, if I know my own heart, in a spirit of the most extended charity, grounded in a sincere regard to the general interests of religion, and particularly affected with veneration for your sacred character and station, and a sense of the weighty obligations thereby laid upon you.

The theological writings in question are confessedly of a *religious* kind, treating on *religious* subjects ; and containing various and interesting explications of the WORD OF GOD, which is the divine fountain and foundation of all *religion*. Much wonderful, and hitherto hidden information, respecting *religion*, is brought to light in them. Various *religious* errors are detected and exposed, various *religious* truths too are manifested, recommended and confirmed : *The ministers of religion*, therefore, must needs feel themselves particularly interested in, and in duty bound to a careful and candid examination of these writings, and of the ground and reasonableness of those high titles by which they are announced to the public.

And as such examination implies at least perusal, serious attention, candor and impartiality of judgment, the exercise of these virtues will also be expected from you. To condemn, therefore, or approve blindly ; to suffer your judgment to be influenced by popular prejudice, or to be determined by the sentiments of others rather than by your own ; to be deterred from engaging in a deliberate and equitable

inquiry, because you have heard the author vilified, and his works stigmatized by those who perhaps *never read them*, or who have an *interest in condemning them*; all this would be criminal in you, and expose you to the censure of all wise and discerning men, and especially of your own consciences at that hour, when you appear in private before the Maker of hearts and the Inspector of secret purposes.

Let it be supposed for a moment, that you had lived in Judea at the time when the incarnate Word appeared there *to give light to them who sat in darkness*; and that your names at this interesting period had been enrolled in the Jewish priesthood: It is very plain that under these circumstances your duty would have called you to form a judgment of that wonderful person, his pretensions and his doctrine. But in forming this judgment, would you have thought it sufficient to hearken only to the voice of the multitude? *Some said, he is a good man, and that never man spake like him; others said nay, but he deceiveth the people; he has a devil and is mad, why hear ye him?* The voice of the multitude, therefore, was divided, and might lead you right, or lead you wrong, according as you received your report from this or that quarter. But would you have thought it safe, or prudent, or conscientious, or becoming your characters as members of the Sanhedrim, entrusted with the oracles of God, and the interpretation of prophecy, and the instruction of the people, and peculiarly called at that period of time to discover the marks of Messiahship, to detect false pretenders, and point out the true Christ—would you, I say, have thought it safe and equitable under these circumstances, to see with another's eyes, and hear with another's ears, instead of using your own? Would you not rather have thought it your duty, and have made it your business, to see and hear the wonderful man yourselves? to examine

his doctrines and pretensions impartially? to acquaint yourselves with the tenor of his life and conversation? to remove from your own hearts every unreasonable suspicion, jealousy, or prejudice, which might pervert your judgment? in short, so to consult by sincerity and purity of intention the divine will and wisdom in yourselves, that you might *know of the doctrine whether it were of God*, or whether the speaker spake of himself?

But you will say, perhaps, there is no similarity at all between the two cases, and therefore no rule of conduct can be deduced from the parallel.

To this I beg leave to reply, that in this respect at least the cases are similar; the voice of the multitude is divided *now* as it was *formerly*, some asserting of the writer in question, as was once said of the Saviour of the world, "*He is a good man, and never man spake like him*"; whilst others on the contrary say, *nay, but he deceiveth the people; he hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him?*" There is also a further ground of similarity, at least according to the honorable author's own testimony, who in all his theological writings asserts in the plainest terms, and endeavors to support his assertion on the evidence of the holy Scriptures, and the testimony of prophecy, that as the Son of man once came in the flesh to be a Redeemer and Saviour of men, by subduing the powers of darkness, and opening anew to mankind in his divine Word and Person the blessed powers of heavenly light and life, so he is at this day effecting *similar* blessed purposes, by opening anew his Holy Word, which has been heretofore unhappily closed, and by supplying thence to mankind such solid and eternal principles of justice and judgment, goodness and truth, as may tend to remove from them all contrary infernal principles of iniquity and error, and reinstate them thus in that blessed communication with heaven, of

order, harmony, righteousness and peace, for which they were created : and this, it is further insisted, is the real sense, import, and perfect fulfilment of many of the prophetic declarations in holy Scripture concerning the Lord's second coming, and the New Jerusalem.

I am well aware that at the very first hearing, many amongst you will be disposed to reject the whole of this testimony : but be it so ; let us suppose it for a moment as false and fabulous as you conceive it to be ; the obligations of duty, resulting from your sacred character as ministers of the truth, are not at all affected by such a supposition : nay, the more of fable and falsehood there is in the above testimony, the more incumbent it is upon you to examine carefully, and with serious deliberation, the writings which contain it, in order to discover where the error and deceit lie, that so you may guard your respective flocks against the specious and spreading delusion.

For whatever may be your sentiments on the subject, this is a notorious fact, that the delusion (if you will call it a delusion) is both *specious* and *spreading*. Thousands in this, and in other kingdoms, have already yielded their unfeigned assent to the testimony which you conceive to be false and fabulous. There are few towns of any consequence in this island, but what contain in the body of their inhabitants, readers and zealous patrons of the writings of Swedenborg. I speak from knowledge and experience when I make this assertion, and when I moreover add, that several of your own order also begin to be convinced that something more than fable or falsehood is contained in the honorable author's testimony, and think it their duty to declare the same to their respective congregations from the pulpit. It is impossible for you to tell how soon this same conviction may reach your own parishes, and therefore the concern which you ought

to have for the salvation of the people committed to your care, calls loudly upon you to exert your utmost talents and abilities in detecting yourselves, and discovering to others, the false principles and reasonings contained in these writings (if such principles and reasonings are contained therein) that so the error may be checked in its growth, and you may thus stand acquitted to your own consciences by a faithful discharge of your ministerial duty.

And here need I suggest, that in case you should think it your duty, after a serious and impartial examination, to oppose the above testimony, something more will be expected from you than that idle declamation, indiscriminate censure, and illiberal invective, which heretofore have been the only weapons employed by his adversaries against our author and his writings? Whensoever you come deliberately to examine the doctrines in question, you will find them supported by solid reasoning, grounded in the most extensive knowledge, both human and divine. You will see a sublime and well-founded philosophy called in to illustrate and confirm the conclusions of theological disquisition. Order, method, arrangement, cool and sober investigation, the most extensive and minute acquaintance with the Word and the Works of God, a sound and discriminating judgment, a most unaffected, yet convincing argumentation, a simple yet manly and intelligible diction,* you will soon discover to be leading and distinguishing characters in these wonderful volumes. In opposing all these powers of persuasion, or of what you may possibly call *seduction*, it will hardly be enough, you may well imagine, to

* This observation is particularly just in regard to the original Latin, in which language the author published all his theological writings; and it is much to be recommended to every reader acquainted with the Latin tongue, to read them in the original, as it has been found impossible to preserve all the simplicity and beauty of the author's style in an English translation.

employ the above-mentioned weapons, which others have heretofore employed with so little success. You will leave to the *memorialist of Jacobinism*,* and to the writer of the *Arminian Magazine*,† the vain expectation of battering down the strong fortress of truth and order, by the weak and illegal engines of unfair and partial quotations, forced misconstructions, and abusive appellations; and perceiving that men of understanding are too enlightened to be convinced by mere railing, declamation and subterfuge, you will abandon all dependence on such vain artifices, and will apply to methods of refutation more becoming the dignity of your sacred character and station, and better adapted to answer the purposes you have in view.

You will perceive that I am here arguing on the supposition that the testimony of Swedenborg is groundless, and that his doctrines are deficient both in point of authority and of truth: but what if the contrary should be found to be the case? What if the honorable author should prove to be a *Scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, and his doctrines to be those *new and old things which the householder bringeth out of his treasure*?‡ What if the days should now be fulfilled for the descent of the *Holy City, New Jerusalem*, announced by a sure prophecy which must needs be accomplished? And what if that pure order of heavenly truth, signified thereby, should be contained and published to mankind in the writings of the *Swedish Scribe*? What if the God of infinite mercy should hereby intend to check the growing powers of ungodliness and infidelity in the earth; to dissipate the clouds of error; to open human minds anew to

* The Abbé Barruel.

† The late Rev. Mr. John Wesley, who, in his animadversions in his magazine on the writings of Swedenborg, I am sorry to say it, hath discovered a sarcastic levity highly unbecoming his sacred office and character.

‡ See Matt. xiii. 52.

the reception of goodness, truth and order, from Himself and His holy Word; and to build thus *his tabernacle* again amongst men, that he may be *their God*, and *they may be his people*?* Your duty, on this supposition, is surely too plain to need pointing out, and you will spare me the pain of supposing that Christian ministers, with the examples of the blind Scribes and Pharisees of old before their eyes, should *neither go into the kingdom themselves, nor suffer them who were entering to go in, thus drawing down again the terrible reprehension of shedding the blood of the prophets whilst they build their tombs, and garnish their sepulchres, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.*†

But you will say, perhaps, it is the height of folly and credulity to suppose what in its very nature is altogether so improbable and impossible.—How? Improbable or impossible that the God of Heaven should discover holy truth to a chosen servant, and that the same God should ordain this servant to instruct his people, by making known to them those pure laws of truth derived from His holy Word, which had been heretofore overlooked or perverted! In what Christian creed have you been taught to believe this? Or in what general council, modern or ancient, was it ever established as an article of faith, that omniscience and omnipotence would no more interfere in the instruction of mankind? That no further aids would ever be supplied from heaven to enlighten and restore fallen creatures? That evil and darkness might increase upon earth, and reign unmolested, but that the Father of Mercies would remain an indifferent spectator, and would make no further exertions to regain his lost empire of light and goodness? That

* See Rev. xxi. 3.

† See Matt. xxiii. 13, 29, 30.

the Almighty did indeed *speak in times past unto the prophets, and in latter days by his Son*, but that henceforth he will be altogether silent, and speak neither by Prophet, Apostle, Seer, Teacher, or any other instrument, to make Himself known, and to reveal again the heavenly truths of his kingdom? In what council, I say, was such an incredible creed as this ever established or even conceived? And yet such is the creed to which all must of necessity subscribe, who reject the testimony of Swedenborg, as *improbable and impossible*.

But possibly you will reject this testimony as *unnecessary*, urging the sufficiency of the written Scriptures which you possess, and that therefore you need not trouble yourselves about any *novel* doctrines. It is granted, you have the written Scriptures of eternal life and truth, and they are amply sufficient to make you and others *wise unto salvation, provided they be rightly understood, and not perverted and falsified by misconstruction and misinterpretation*. But what if these Scriptures should be misconstrued and misinterpreted? What if *false* doctrines should be derived from them instead of true? What if they should be made to say things which they do not say, yea, which they expressly contradict? What if the state of the church should have become such, that different and even contrary doctrines are every day deduced from those sacred records, so that the simple do not know what or whom to believe? What if *the Word of God is thus made of none effect by the traditions and corrupt glosses of mistaken men*, as was the case amongst the Jews when our Lord came into the world, answering herein to that description in the prophet, "*The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book*

*is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I am not learned? "** Surely under these circumstances you will be disposed to allow the *necessity* of some *new*† interpretation of the Holy Book, in order that its genuine sense and meaning may be known and understood, and it may thus answer the salutary and saving purposes for which it was written: And surely you must allow further, that such are the circumstances which at this day unhappily attend the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, whilst you observe that the most learned and able critics of the times are at perpetual war with each other concerning such interpretation, insomuch that they cannot even agree amongst themselves touching the *two essentials* of Christian Faith and Life, viz. the *Divinity of the Christian Redeemer, and the necessity of good works.*

But you will say, perhaps, we could give immediate assent to the doctrines delivered by Swedenborg, provided their authority had been supported by *miracles*; and we are of opinion, that in a matter of so much importance, there was an expediency, and even a necessity, that some such *preternatural* testimony should have been super-added, in aid of that which is to be collected from the mere verbal declarations of the writer, and the apparent truth of his doctrines. But let me ask in reply, what kind of *miraculous* testimony would you have required on this occa-

* See Isaiah xxix. 11, 12.

† It is well to be noted that all the *doctrinal* parts of Swedenborg's theological writings are grounded in the Holy Scripture, and are nothing but expositions of the genuine sense and meaning of those sacred records. He asserts, therefore, nothing properly *new* in the way of doctrine, but only, according to the talent with which he was gifted, and the light with which he was favored, points out the errors of many prevailing opinions arising from false and perverted interpretations of the Sacred Volume, and at the same time makes known the real truth, as discoverable from the Holy Word, and in agreement with its pure and unperverted signification.

sion? The Jews required of our Lord *a sign from heaven*, and not content with the wonderful miracles he had wrought for their conviction, in healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, feet to the lame, and ears to the deaf, they were urgent for some other *still more extraordinary* token of the truth of his mission. This, you will allow, was a criminal perverseness and obstinacy amongst the Jews; but do not you offend in like manner on the present occasion respecting the credentials of the Swedish Scribe? Do not you overlook the *real great* signs and miracles which have been wrought for your conviction, whilst you require such *other* signs and miracles, as perhaps, if granted, would not produce conviction, or, if they did produce conviction, would possibly but increase thereby your condemnation?—I could wish this matter to be well considered and understood by you, being well aware, that such as object to Swedenborg the want of miraculous testimony, have never yet given the nature of that testimony a proper degree of serious attention. For, let me ask, hath not a miraculous testimony, and this of a most extraordinary nature, such as was never yet vouchsafed to mankind since the foundation of the world, been vouchsafed in the present instance? What could be a greater miracle than that a man like ourselves, for the space of twenty-seven years continually, should enjoy open communication with the spiritual world, so as to be enabled to discourse with spirits and angels, and to see the things of that world, which, according to the general laws of nature, are totally concealed from mortal eyes? What again could be a greater miracle, than that by means of this same man, the internal spiritual sense of the Holy Scriptures is now opened and made manifest, which hath been heretofore deeply hid and concealed from the most enlightened persons of former ages? Lastly, what

could be a greater miracle, than the fulfilment hereby of ancient prophecies, in *raising up again the tabernacle of David which had fallen down*, and building up a new spiritual temple of pure worshippers of the great JEHOVAH, signified and predicted in the Revelation under the figure of the *Bride*, the *Lamb's Wife*? Yet you reject all this most extraordinary evidence, which is enough to convince every serious and well-disposed mind, and in the mean while, what is the evidence you require in its place? Why, like the dissatisfied Jews of old, *a sign from heaven*, a miracle of your own choosing and not of God's, an imaginary testimony which, I will be bold to say, would not produce conviction, if granted, or, if it did produce conviction, would not tend at all to forward your salvation, but possibly would have a direct contrary tendency. For, alas! in these days of infidelity and skepticism, how few would have believed in the *kind of miracles* which you require, and what endless doubts and suspicions would have been excited respecting their authenticity and credibility! How many would have imputed them to an infernal instead of a divine agency! How many would have made them even a ground and reason for refusing their assent to our author's doctrines, urging them as marks of Anti-christ, and of the *false prophet*, rather than of the *true*, and sheltering themselves herein under the declaration of Christ himself, who hath said, that *false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect!**

Besides, who cannot see plainly, that all such miraculous testimony as you require, may be dangerous, even where it is received and acknowledged, by *compelling* belief, and thus forcing a stronger conviction

* Mark xiii. 22. See also the Revelation, chap. xiii. 14; where the beast is described as deceiving by miracles.

on the understanding than is in agreement with the life's love, in which case a more terrible condemnation may be the consequence? Who cannot therefore see, that the cry for some other more convincing miraculous testimony than is already vouchsafed, under the marvellous dispensation of grace and truth now offered unto men, is in the nature of it most unreasonable, to say no worse of it, and will be found to deserve that severe reprehension which the God of truth and reason gave on a similar occasion of old, when he said, *an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.**

But methinks I hear you urge, as a final unanswerable argument against acceding to the testimony of Swedenborg, that the dispensation of grace and truth in Jesus Christ, when he became incarnate here on earth, is the last and crowning dispensation which God hath to offer unto mankind; that it is all-complete and all-sufficient for every purpose of salvation, being the end of the law and the prophets, and containing so full and perfect a revelation of the will of the Creator to his creatures, as to supersede the necessity of any further dispensation; consequently no further dispensation is to be expected, and nothing is required of the ministers of the gospel but to believe in and preach Jesus Christ, and obedience to his commandments, which will be abundantly competent to secure every possible blessing both to themselves and the people committed to their care.—It is granted: The dispensation of grace and truth in Jesus Christ is as you represent it, all-complete and all-sufficient; and it will assuredly be well with you and with your people, and you can want no other dispensation to secure your eternal happiness, if Jesus Christ be preached, and his commandments obeyed. But let me ask, is this

* Matt. xii. 39.

the case ? In the first place, is Jesus Christ preached ? Do you believe on him yourselves as the **ONE ONLY LORD AND GOD** of Heaven and Earth, and do you teach your people so to believe on him ? Do you acknowledge the **FATHER** and the **SON** to be *one in Him*, as he Himself hath taught, and that of consequence He is the manifested Jehovah, the sole Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator of man ? Or rather, have not some amongst you entirely rejected this your God, by denying his divinity ? And have not others divided this one only Lord and God into three, making one God of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost ? Do not you regard **JESUS CHRIST** either as a mere creature, or as a Divine Person separate from, and subordinate to, the Father ? Do not you regard the Holy Ghost as a Person separate from both, assigning to each separately distinct attributes and offices ? Is not your idea of God become thus altogether confused and perplexed, so that you know not to what or to whom to direct your worship, sometimes addressing yourselves to the Father, sometimes to the Son, and sometimes to the Holy Ghost, but never to Jesus Christ alone as the one only God, in whose divine person the sacred Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is contained ?

And, let me ask further, is not this confusion and perplexity, in your ideas of Jesus Christ, manifested by want of power in your public preaching and ministry ? Are not your people left hereby unconverted, unreformed, and unedified, not being directed to that *one* redeeming Lord God, who can alone truly convert, reform, and edify them ? Is not Jesus Christ, therefore, in reality, disbelieved in ? and are not his commandments, of consequence, disobeyed ? and is not this too generally evidenced in the lives of your people, by the want of those signs ever attendant on a true faith and obedience, viz., repentance, deliverance

from the power of evil, and renovation of life according to the law and order of Heaven, grounded in the pure love of God and man? I should be exceedingly sorry to judge herein an unrighteous judgment, or to lead others to do so; but surely the growing iniquity of the times is a pressing reason to suspect that all is not right herein, and as pressing a motive for all, but especially the ministers of the Gospel, to enquire seriously whence the wrongness comes, what is its real cause, and what may be its effectual cure. And if from such inquiry it shall appear that the knowledge of the Christian God and Redeemer, and of the nature of salvation by him, is now almost totally lost in the Christian world, in consequence whereof neither is Jesus Christ preached, nor his commandments obeyed, and that thus the dispensation of grace and truth, opened by this incarnate God under his first manifestation in the flesh, is, in a great measure, become of none effect, being rendered insufficient to answer the saving purposes intended by it; in this case, surely, must appear at the same time, the expediency and necessity of some *new* dispensation of heavenly doctrine, not for the purpose of revealing a *new* will of God, a *new* commandment, a *new* Saviour, or a *new* mode of salvation; but only of making known again to mankind that *old* will of God, that *old* commandment, that *old* Saviour, and *old* mode of salvation, which, in these latter days, through the overflowings of iniquity and error, had been nearly lost sight of and made ineffectual. That such a dispensation is now opened in the writings of the Swedish Scribe, will be manifest to every candid and serious reader, it being the one only end and object of those writings, to call men back again to Jesus Christ, and to point out the true nature and manner of salvation by him.

I repeat it, therefore, again; be these writings true

or false; be their authority well or ill-founded; be they from the *Father of Lights*, or from the *father of lies*, it is your office and duty, as ministers of the truth, to examine well into the nature of their evidence, and the degree of credibility which is due to them. You cannot possibly excuse yourselves from the discharge of this duty: A regard to truth and the interests of religion demands it of you; and you are bound to greater caution herein, inasmuch as the judgment you form will not affect yourselves only, but will affect also the people committed to your care, so that the salvation of thousands may possibly depend upon your decision in this interesting case. If Swedenborg, therefore, be an *heaven-taught scribe*, your own consciences will dictate to you in a more powerful language than that of any human words, how you ought to hear what he teaches, and not only hear him yourselves, but also make his doctrines known to others, as far as ability is given: And if he be a *false teacher* and deceiver, you are still equally bound to discover and make known the fallacy and deceitfulness, by which he hath already begun to impose upon thousands, that so the error may be nipped in the bud.

Many *prejudices*, it must be acknowledged, arising from a variety of sources, at present stand in the way to oppose in your minds the testimony of the honorable author here presented before you: But, let me ask, what teacher of truth, whether ancient or modern, religious or philosophical, hath not *prejudice* opposed? The prophets of old, you well know, were each of them, in their turn, violently assaulted by *prejudice*. The God of Truth Himself, when manifested in the flesh, did not escape *prejudice*. His most venerable followers, in all ages, after the example of their Divine Master, have had to combat with the same unreasonable adversary, *prejudice*. *Preju-*

dice, too, hath had the boldness to oppose the conclusions of a sound philosophy, as well as of a sound theology, and you need not be informed, that, had the voice of *prejudice* prevailed, the brightest discoveries of the most able philosopher that ever contemplated the works of the God of nature, had still laid buried in obscurity.*

But it was always deemed a characteristic of true wisdom to overcome *prejudice*. The lover of truth is taught to believe this, and to be persuaded that truth is not less truth because it is vilified and opposed; neither is error less error because it hath numbers on its side, and is exalted to honor and pre-eminence. Your candor will keep this observation ever in view; and, feeling the force of it, you will not be deterred from endeavoring to discover and develope the fair and heavenly form of wisdom, even though disguised by the mantle with which an unreasonable aversion may have veiled it. You will be bold to strip off this mantle, not intimidated by equivocal appellations, such as *mystic*, *visionary*, *enthusiast*, *gnostic*, *sabellian*,† and the like, which you may find written upon it by ignorant or ill-designing men, who seek thus to depreciate the useful labors of an enlightened teacher,

* It is well known how the philosophical principles of Sir Isaac Newton were opposed and controverted in his own country at their first publication; nor was the prejudice against them removed until they had received the sanction of approbation from the learned in other parts of Europe, and were sent back again into England, embellished and enforced by the annotations of the French commentators.

† *Mystic*, *visionary*, and *enthusiast*, are names importing at this day, that a writer on spiritual subjects sees somewhat deeper than the generality of his readers. In regard to the appellation of *gnostic* and *sabellian*, which have been bestowed occasionally on our author, it is hard to say in what they have originated, unless in this: that every theologian, who makes any pretensions to philosophical knowledge, is to be called a *gnostic*, and every writer, who maintains the union of the Father and Son in the Person of JESUS CHRIST, is to be called a *sabellian*.

and then for your reward you may hope to recognize and embrace, as your own, the simple, but beautiful body of everlasting truth and order.

I wish only further to observe on the subject, that it is impossible for you to read many pages of the writings in question, seriously, and in a Christian spirit, without discovering some things of importance, which must needs affect every well-disposed mind. You will see, for example, the Divinity of the Christian Redeemer, and his oneness with the Father, principally insisted upon, and demonstrated with such a power of solid proof, deduced from the Sacred Scriptures in general, as will supply the most effectual antidote against the poisonous tenets of modern *Arianism* and *Socinianism*. You will see, also, the sacred doctrine of the HOLY TRINITY explained and elucidated, in a manner so simple and yet sublime, so agreeable to the Word of God, and at the same time so consonant to sound reason, so satisfactory to the understanding, and so edifying to the life, that you will wonder how so much darkness could ever prevail in the world, respecting so bright and clear a truth ; but will wonder still more, that, now the truth is discovered in its brightness, all mankind do not immediately assent to and rejoice in it. You will see, likewise, the *sanctity of the Holy Scriptures* taught and explained, and the hidden wisdom thereof opened and brought to light, by the *doctrine of correspondencies*,*

* The *doctrine of correspondence between things spiritual and natural*, according to our author's testimony, is the only key by which the genuine internal sense of the Holy Scriptures can be opened and discovered ; and this circumstance is remarkable in favor of his testimony, that by the help of this same key he was enabled to open the books of Genesis and Exodus, as well as the Revelation. *Grotius*, *Mede*, *More*, and others, who have labored to explain this latter book, all saw the necessity of some such key to effect their purpose ; and *More's* treatise on *Iconisms* is nothing but an imperfect sketch of the doctrine of correspondence. How far the interpretation of these expositors, for want of this key, falls

with such a fulness of conviction, as will at the same time, both greatly astonish and edify you, whilst it supplies an *internal evidence* of the Divinity of the sacred Word, and particularly of the apocalyptic* part of it, infinitely surpassing; yet not overturning, but confirming, all its *external* evidence.

You will see, further, the purest, plainest, and most consistent *doctrine of life* presented to your view, and contrasted with those impure, dark, and inconsistent tenets, which are at this day so frequently taught and circulated under the venerable name of Christian precepts. And here you will be surprised to find every evil of life, and every error of doctrine, detected and described, which in these latter times threaten the very existence of religion in the kingdoms of the earth, and cause so much serious alarm in the minds of many Christians, who look further than the mere skin and complexion of the church, to form a judgment of the soundness of its constitution. You will see, also, pointed out, the root whence such anti-christian evils and errors have sprung, how they have all originated in mistaken ideas of the Divine Being, his nature and mode of existence and operation, and in the consequent separation of the three

short of our author's, both in point of clearness and fulness, must appear manifest to every intelligent and attentive reader.

* It is well known, that, for some centuries in the earlier ages of the church, the authenticity of the Apocalypse, which book is now received as canonical, was by some doubted and disputed. It will be the happiness of succeeding Christians, who receive the testimony of our author, to be convinced of the divine origin of this extraordinary volume, by such unequivocal characters of authenticity arising from its internal sense, now opened and explained, as will leave in the believing mind no longer room for doubt or disputation, but will, on the contrary, excite the most devout thanksgiving to the Father of Mercies, for having been graciously pleased to preserve in the church a code of prophecies, the remarkable accomplishment whereof, if duly attended to, will be found to supply an evidence in favor of Divine revelation, equal, at least, if not superior, to the most signal and best attested miraculous interposition.

essentials of Christian life and salvation, viz., *charity, faith, and good works*. And whilst you lament the unhappy causes and consequences of such an unscriptural and irrational theology which you will here see figuratively depicted under the significative images of *Dragon, Beast, false Prophet, and the great Whore*, mentioned in the Revelation, you will not fail to rejoice in the prospect of an order of pure truth and doctrine, about to be manifested from Heaven to mankind, signified and represented by the *Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven*, whereby all false, perverted principles of faith and life will be dissipated in such pure minds as are meet for its reception; and the understanding be enlightened, the will purified, and the life restored to the order of Heaven, a near and blessed conjunction will again take place between the Creator and his creatures, predicted and described in these words: "*The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them their God.*"*

How far the author's interpretation of Apocalyptic prophecies, relating to the present corruptions of Christendom, and the expectation of a blessed revival of the pure law and order of Heaven amongst men, is agreeable to experience and fact, as manifested in the circumstances of the times, and in the external state of the Christian world at this day, I leave to the determination of your own private and unprejudiced judgment. But surely the great overflowings of iniquity amongst all ranks and degrees of men; the general disregard shown to things of a serious and eternal nature; the small remains left of the fear of God, and a reverence for his laws in the minds of mankind; the various and violent disputings amongst different sects and parties respecting truth, *nation*

* See Rev. xxi. 3.

thus rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; the growing denial of that most important and essential article of Christian faith, the Divinity of the Christian Redeemer, whose very name it is become an offence to mention in most of our genteel circles; the difficulty of discovering where and what truth is, and the greater difficulty of holding fast to it, when it is discovered; the accumulated pressure of human miseries in their different forms and degrees, and especially the *inward* troubles and exercises which good men experience; not to mention the general apprehension prevailing in the minds of many serious persons, that some *extraordinary* operation of the Divine Providence is *now* in agitation—all these, with divers other circumstances of a similar kind which might be adduced, are certainly strong collateral testimonies in favor of his interpretation, and must needs have proportionable weight with candid and unprejudiced minds to incline them to believe it.

But after all, it is not the testimony of fact and experience uniting its evidence with that of our author's interpretation of prophecy; neither is it the brightness and power of divine truth discoverable in such interpretation; nor yet the consistency, the harmony, the clearness, the edifying tendency of every page of his Theological Writings, which will of *themselves* lead to conviction, and beget a full persuasion of the author's faithful testimony in your minds, or in the minds of others. To produce this happy effect, it is necessary that the reader's understanding be *previously prepared, by a meet disposition, for the reception of truth*, without which preparation the truth itself, let it be ever so much confirmed, must needs appear untrue, and the more so, in proportion to the unprepared state of the mind and temper, agreeable to the declaration of the TRUTH ITSELF, "*He*

who doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." *

If this consideration is permitted to have its due influence, it will doubtless lead you, and every reader of the writings in question, to attend well to the spirit and disposition in which you read, from a prudent and profitable suspicion, that something may be wrong in the state of the person's mind who reads, as well as in the matter of the book which he reads, and that it is not always the fault of an author that his works are not generally received and approved. You will, therefore, begin, like pure lovers of the truth, before you read, to remove from your hearts all those unreasonable prejudices and partialities which might tend to blind your eyes and pervert your judgments. You will recollect your Lord's words where he saith, "*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ;*" † and with these words in your remembrance, you will see the expediency of putting away from you all that *mere worldly wisdom and prudence* which they condemn, as tending to hide the things of God, and the equal necessity of cherishing that child-like and simple temper of mind, to which *alone* the things of God ever have been, and ever will be, made manifest. You will be taught, also, by the same divine words, in your examination of truth, not to place an ill-grounded dependence on any attainments of mere human science, or any natural talents or intellectual abilities you may possess, knowing that such advantages, unless under the guidance of an humble and teachable spirit, have, in all ages of the church, excited the bitterest persecution against the truth of God, insomuch that when this Truth appeared on earth in Person, the cry of *Crucify him, crucify him*, was

* See John iii. 20.

† Matt. xi. 25.

principally at the instigation of learned critics, deep-read scholars, admired orators, inquisitive philosophers, and especially of what were deemed, at the time, able expositors of the divine Oracles. You will be further cautioned by the above words, in your examination of truth, against that servile attachment to great names, and the influence of human authorities, which is ever suggesting the old question, *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* And remembering that rulers may be deceived, and have been deceived, as well as other people, yea, and are frequently more exposed to deception, as being more exposed to the temptations arising from an overweening conceit of their own *wisdom and prudence*, you will assert the freedom of thinking and judging for yourselves, in that which so essentially concerns yourselves, and will be bold, in the pursuit of truth, not only to oppose all motives of worldly interest and honor, but even the most respectable powers and authorities amongst men, whensoever they stand in competition with the higher power and authority of that *wisdom which is from above*.

Commending you to the guidance of this wisdom in all things, and sincerely wishing you in possession of all its comforts, I remain, with all possible veneration for your sacred office and character,

*Your affectionate Brother and Fellow-laborer
in the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, to whom be
Glory and Dominion in all Ages.*

JOHN CLOWES.

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